



FireScape: Preserving Our Mountains by Thinking Big

Presented by the FireScape Team

Coronado National Forest

The Nature Conservancy

The University of Arizona

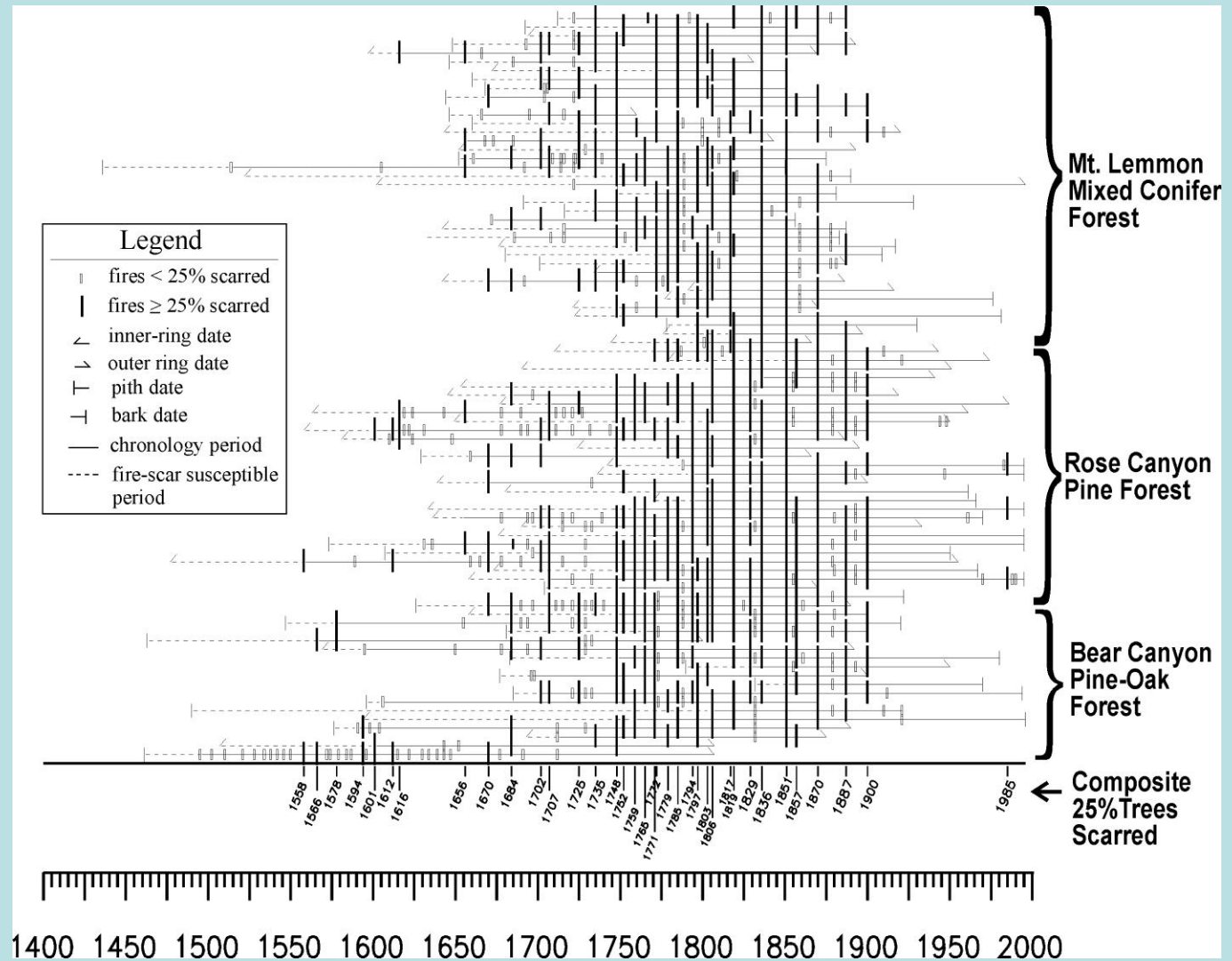
We've heard this story over and over.



Before the late 1800s fires burned frequently in southwestern forests, woodlands, and grasslands and generally stayed on the ground.



Removal of
fine fuels by
grazing and
suppression
stopped those
regular fires.



Now we have



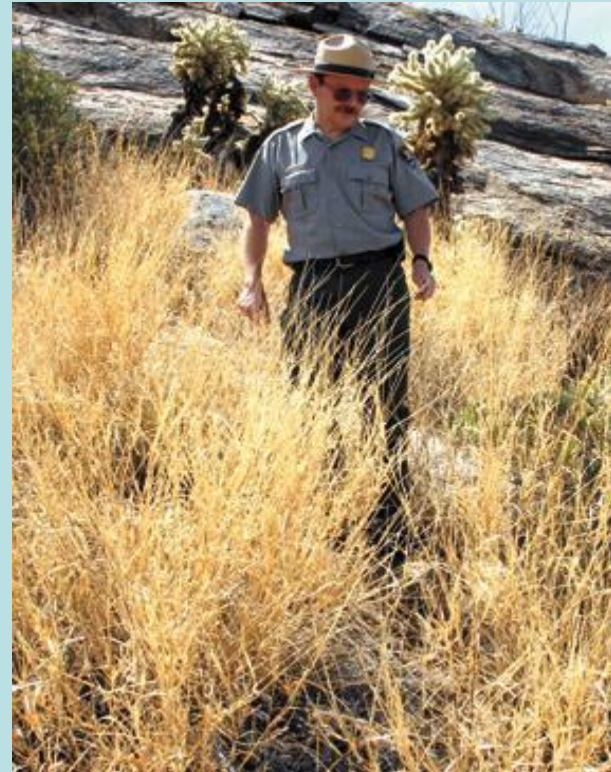
Overly woody conditions



High severity fire effects



Development at the
wildland-urban interface



Invasive exotics carrying
fire where it doesn't belong

Challenge: In the face of climate change, create *resilient* landscapes that can bounce back predictably from fire.



Challenge: Manage effectively in landscapes that do not need frequent fire:

- Arizona chaparral
- spruce-fir forests
- Sonoran desert



We need to step up the scale of fire treatments to

- restore ecosystems
- assure safe coexistence of communities and wildlands.



The Coronado National Forest has been working for more than a decade to remove barriers to allowing fire to play its natural role in Sky Island Ecosystems.

These efforts now fall under the “FireScape” umbrella.

Essence of FireScape

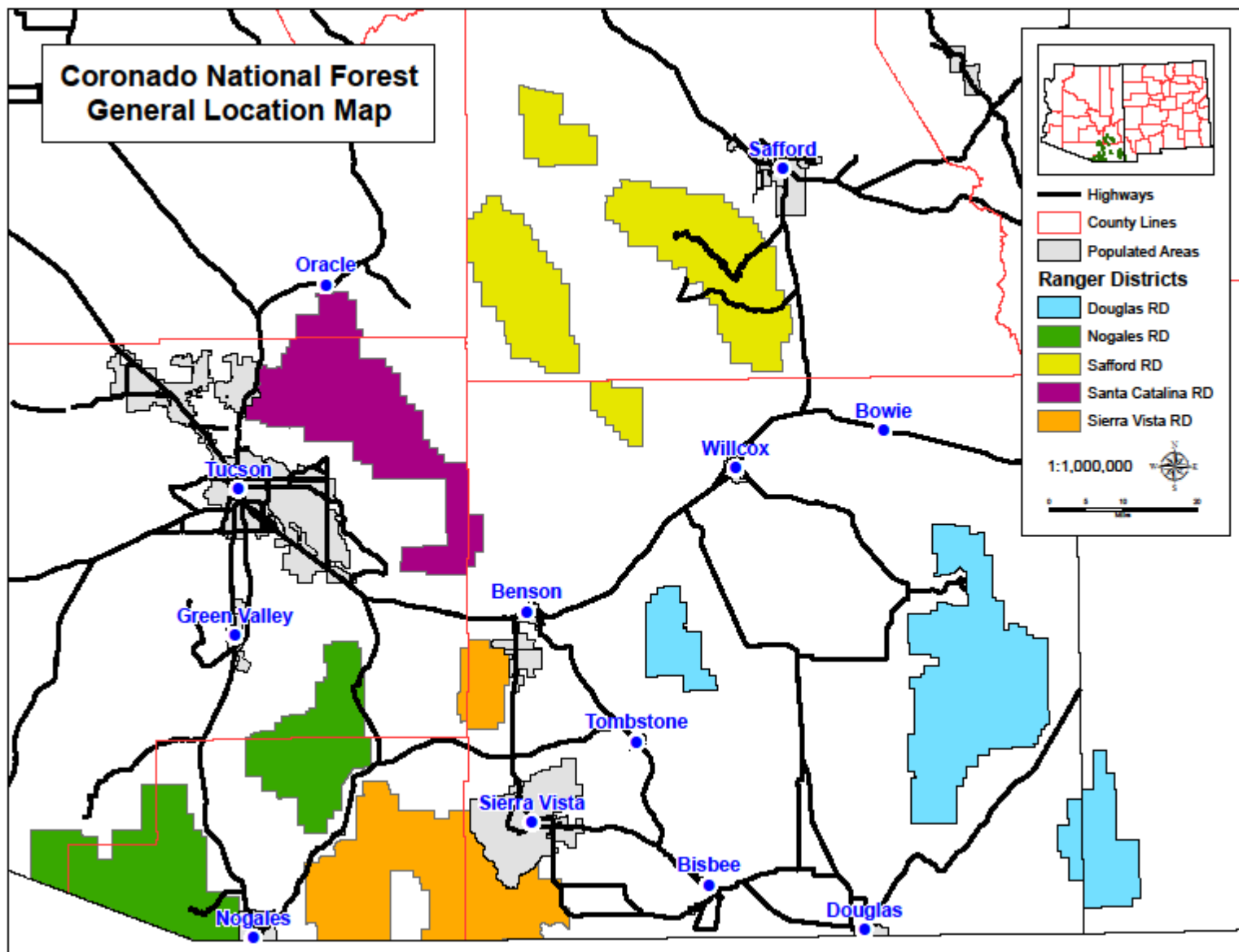
- Work at large (whole-mountain) scale
- Cross jurisdictional boundaries
- Target barriers to implementation
- Apply science early and often
- Creatively adjust the recipe for each landscape

... and allow passionate, creative people to lead us towards what we know is the right thing to do.

Fire Management across the Coronado must also address

- Ecological types ranging from upland desert to spruce-fir
- Discrete mountains with different sets of neighbors and different kinds of WUI
- Difficult terrain for many treatment types
- Ability to manage wildfires for resource benefit
- Wilderness restrictions on prescribed fire
- Maintaining habitat for many listed species

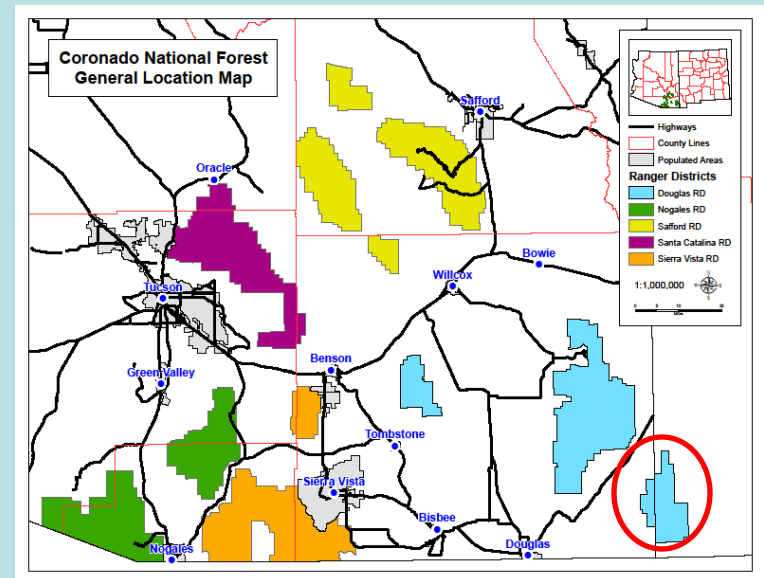
Coronado National Forest General Location Map



Peloncillo Programmatic Fire Plan (1999)

Set up treatment sideboards to allow for large prescribed burns in habitat of endangered New Mexico Ridge-nosed Rattlesnake.

Malpai Borderlands Group interest helped drive process.



Huachuca FireScape

Partners developed ecological map as basis for restoration of 500,000-acre landscape.

Partners completed fire management plan (2005).

Lack of “shelf stock” viewed as barrier to treating at scale.

Whole-landscape Biological Opinion issued to address 10 federally listed species shared by three federal land managers.

Three-agency, whole-landscape EA completed—currently waiting out DN appeal period (Forest Service).

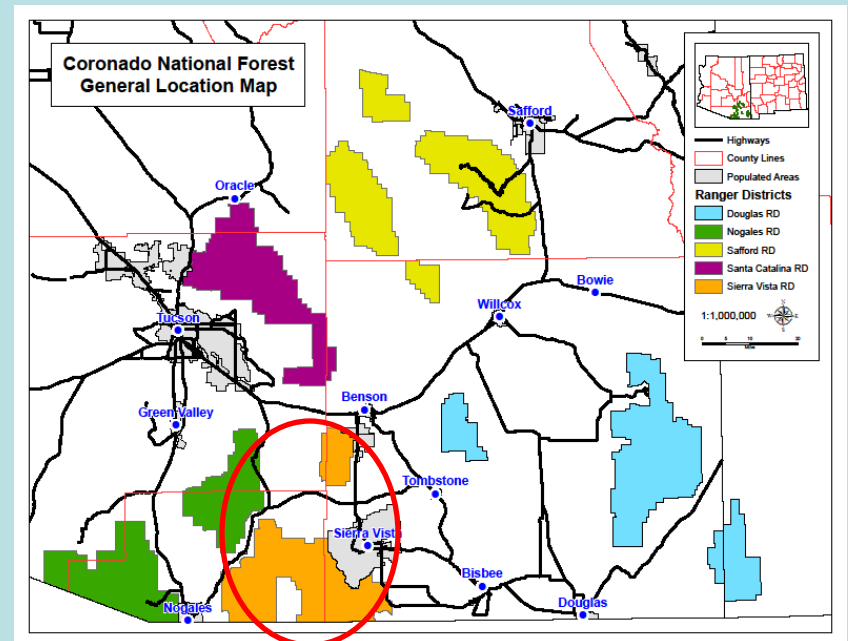
Coronado NF, Fort Huachuca, Coronado National Memorial

Huachuca analysis based on treatment options within ecological types

Project boundaries not specified

Strict, best-management-practice sideboards

Detailed monitoring plan is part of the action

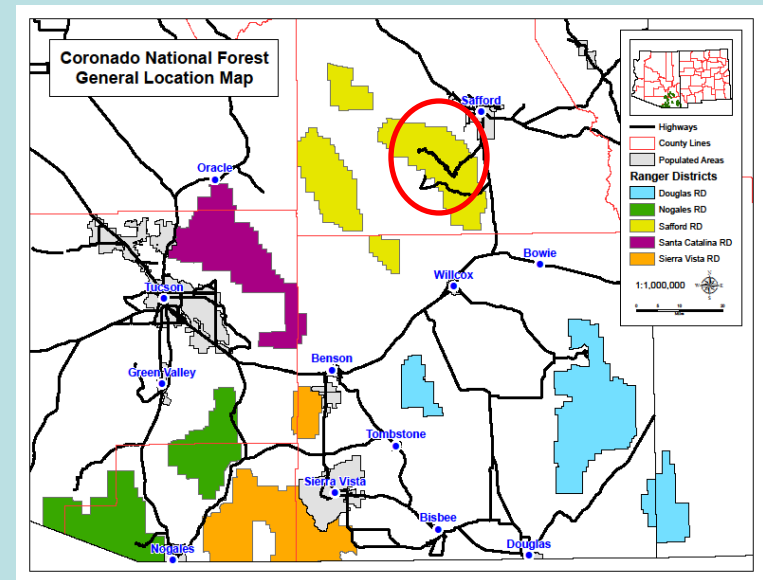


Pinaleno Ecosystem Restoration Project

CNF needs to protect values at risk where fire regime is stand replacing.

Rigorous, fine-scale approach to treating mountaintop allows fire to play its natural role on large landscape below.

EIS completed in 2009.



Catalina-Rincon FireScape

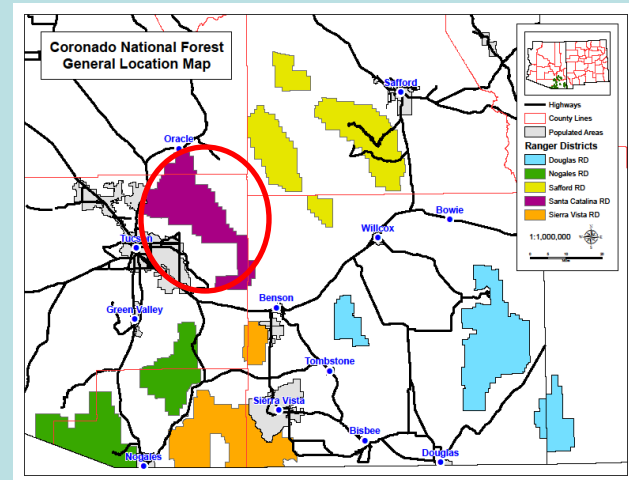
Large-scale treatments needed to avoid future Bullock-Aspen events (but mosaic is an opportunity)

WUI and buffelgrass cause managers to lose sleep

Cross-boundary ecological mapping complete, fuels analysis underway, and other UA-led information products scheduled for delivery

Land-manager partners are engaging

Big outreach/web component--public process about to begin as a prelude to compliance steps.



Coronado NF, Saguaro NP, State of AZ, Pima County

Chiricahua-Dragoon FireScape

Landscape restoration goal

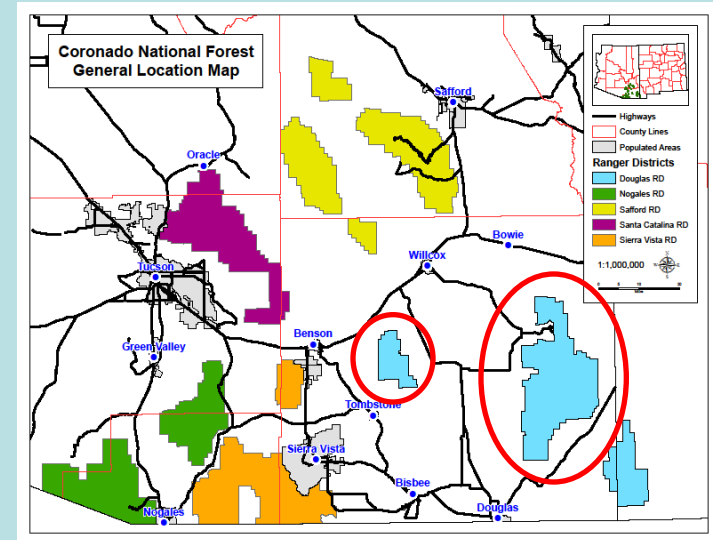
Fire history compilation and
new data collection

Localized but “frightening” WUI

Will forego ecological mapping on eve of TES
for district (start with mid-scale veg map)

Ranchlands on boundary included in analysis
and replacement of range improvements
important

Coronado NF, Chiricahua NM, Fort Bowie NHS, Leslie Canyon
NWR, private lands



Galiuro FireScape

Previous planning has ranchers interested

Little WUI means lots of opportunity

Need for treatment in wilderness central challenge

Environmental groups at the table

Arizona Game and Fish on board

Coronado NF, BLM, The Nature Conservancy

